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ABSTRACT

The report opens with a discussion of how education and community are closely associated throughout traditional education and history, and how changes in one of these influence the other. It then turns to a review of past literature examining educational objectives and the skills needed by educators. Such skills must be used to adapt to the expansion of multiculturalism and the many challenges presented by the increasing diversity of student populations. The role of the global educational administrator is detailed next along with the responsibility of administrators to upgrade skills so as to become qualified for interaction and cooperation on the international stage. It is emphasized that when analyzing the goals and responsibilities of educational leaders in the global community, the needs of the world community be addressed. Some practical suggestions based on professional experience are offered. (RJM)

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Educational Administration in the Global Community

by

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Curriculum Vitae

Margaret Gorts Morabito is the Director and Founder of CALCampus, an international adult, online learning center available solely through the Internet. She has a Masters degree in education from Keene State College, New Hampshire and a Bachelors degree in English from the University of Miami, Florida. Ms. Morabito designed and developed CALCampus and has been its director and an English teacher in it since it first went online in 1986. Having been in the forefront in the development and application of online distance education on an international level, the author is able to relate to the field with an insider's viewpoint.

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I. Analysis

Need and Purpose

Throughout educational history, a main goal of the educational system has been to serve the needs of the local community or society. Today, educational administrators in higher and adult education are beginning to realize the need to reexamine their definition of community to include the world and to examine the resulting new demands placed on them. This paper discusses the role of the educational administrator in this newly expanded educational community, as well as the role of computer-based telecommunications and the Internet as tools for serving the instructional needs of the global community.

Methodology

This paper is a result of independent study, research, and practical application. Conclusions are based upon a combination of learning from current and past educational studies, as well as from firsthand experience in administrating and teaching in an international online school, CALCampus (http://www.calcampus.com). Literature for this paper was located through Internet resources, including online library searches through the following sites: CARL System Library Catalogs (telnet://192.54.81.76) or (http://www.carl.org), the ERIC Digest (gopher://gopher.ed.gov/11/programs/ERIC/searchs), and the Institute For Learning Technologies (ILT) at Columbia University (http://www.ilt.columbia.edu). CARL searches resulted in acquiring texts through traditional offline libraries, while ERIC and ILT searches resulted in accessing articles in electronic form which were then printed for research and reference.

Definitions

The terms education and community are two concepts closely associated throughout traditional educational theory and history. In the writings of early educational historians, the definition of education was based upon the demands of society to control the social class structure. In the early part of the 20th century, for example, Europe's social class structure was fairly static and the educational objective of the time was to provide the proper education and training for the future roles of students within their natural born class. As time passed, however, educators began to realize that what they taught in their schools affected society just as much as society affected what they taught in their schools. Educators began to reevaluate their objectives and historians began to revise their approach to the study of education to scrutinize the interplay between education and society" (Cordasco xii).

This connection between education and society becomes more complicated when one tries to define community in the 1990s. The dictionary definition of community is "a group of people living in the same locality and under the same government" (American Heritage Dictionary 1992). However, this does not go far enough. John Dewey, as early as 1916, stated that society was not dictated by physical proximity alone, and his words previewed the growing demand for international distance education today. Indeed, "a book or letter may institute a more intimate association between human beings separated by thousands of miles from each other than exists between dwellers under the same roof" (Dewey Ch. 1 n.pag.), his point being that close proximity does not necessarily result in a shared community.

Furthermore, Cordasco points out one of the major flaws in the dominant educational theory which states that "everything which may be identified with education responds to or fulfills the needs of society," and, that is the question of who exactly defines society and what constitutes society (xi)? This provides a dilemma for educators, especially in the 1990s when the concepts of society and community encompass the entire world through the result of computer technology, the Internet, expanded travel, and communications.

Expected Findings

Due to this redefining of community, educational administrators will need to realize their expanding roles on the international stage and learn new skills to handle international cooperation and communication. Through this refocusing, changes will take place with regard to school curriculum, institutional objectives, instructional methods, faculty selection, and ways of communicating. More significantly, administrators will need to realize that their potential student base is internationally located. To handle this global student base, educational administrators will need to expand the uses of technology in their institutions, including adopting computerized, Internet-based technology as a vehicle for both providing and receiving instruction from the international, educational community.

II. Comparison

Past Literature

One of the cornerstones in educational theory and practice is Benjamin Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives. In this book, one can see the recurrent theme of defining education in relation to community. Bloom stated that it was the job of the school to formulate clearly identifiable goals for its students, which could be measured in terms of changes in student behavior for the purpose of preparing students to function effectively in society. The educational administrator's job is to define the educational objectives, given the community that surrounds his school. The formulation of educational objectives is a conscious decision based upon several kinds of data: information about the students' needs and interests, and investigations of the conditions and problems of contemporary life which make demands on the students (Bloom 25).

Bloom pointed out that educators must teach knowledge and problem-solving skills "from a consideration of the nature of the society and culture in which we live, the knowledge that is available to us, and the kind of citizen the school seeks to develop" (39). This goal can be difficult to achieve, however, when the educator must deal with a constantly changing culture in which his students live and will live. "It is impossible to foresee the particular ways in which culture will change," wrote Bloom, and emphasis in the schools must be placed "on the development of generalized ways of attacking problems and on knowledge which can be applied to a wide range of new situations" (39).

Bloom's comments in the 1950s previewed one of the major problems facing modern educators in the 1990s; that is to serve the needs of a multicultural, world community. In the United States alone, our local schools serve such a varied multicultural community that it poses a

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problem for educators who seek to meet the needs of all of the subcultures of their students. When we move this predicament into the global community, the problem is compounded and the goals of the educator become more complex. School administrators in America today need to learn how to serve the local, resident, multicultural student body. Depending on the objectives of the school, many of these administrators will also need to learn how to serve a geographically remote, international student body.

Multiculturalism Expanded

Donna Gollnick and Philip Chinn, in Multicultural Education in a Pluralistic Society, discuss the local aspect of this new scenario: the demographic fact that the United States is a multicultural society in which varied cultural groups study together in the same classroom. Multiculturalism is defined by the fact that individuals have competencies in and can operate successfully in two or more different cultures. Pluralism specifies that cultural groups within a varied society maintain separate and distinct identities from the dominant group (Gollnick and Chinn 17). Since it is the educator's responsibility to serve the needs of society, it is clearly a more difficult responsibility to serve the needs of a multicultural *and* pluralistic society within one school and within one classroom. "The complexity of pluralism in the United States makes it difficult for the educator to develop expectations of students based on their group memberships" (Gollnick and Chinn iv). This complexity originates from the fact that people of one cultural group are expected to follow certain behavioral patterns that are generally accepted within that group. The culture itself imposes order and meaning on the experiences of its members, and it allows its members to predict how others will behave in certain situations (Gollnick and Chinn 7).

Gollnick and Chinn are reflecting on the problems associated with multiculturalism within the classrooms of a physical school whose students live in the local community. Expand this concept to the virtual classrooms of the world community and think about it. Telecommunications technology moves this concept of multiculturalism from inside the physical school out into the

world where non-resident students from other countries may interact with students, teachers, and administrators of distant schools. Educational administrators, especially in higher education and adult education, should realize that their potential student body today is not limited to within commuting range of the school. Internationally, there is a global student body already in place that is demanding educational opportunities from remote schools through the use of Internet-based distance education.

The Global Educational Administrator

In Sarah Pickert's "Preparing for a Global Community: Achieving an International Perspective in Higher Education", the movement towards a more global view of community is discussed. Pickert writes:

> With the world integrated by economics, communications, transportation, and politics, Americans increasingly see that they live and work in a global marketplace of goods, services, and ideas. Policy makers and the public want educational programs to reflect the international ties that bind people as they bind nations." (n. pag.)

Indeed, it is not only Americans who see this integration of the world community into their daily lives and the resulting effect upon their educational system, the citizens of the many nations of the world are seeing this happen, too, and they are responding. Pickert focuses her discussion on higher education in the United States; however, her point is applicable to nations from all around the world and to other levels of education. She writes, "The challenge to educators is to deliver graduates who are competent not only to function professionally in an international environment, but who are equipped to make personal and public-policy decisions as citizens of an international society" (n. pag.). The idea of delivering graduates who can function in an international working world is already a given requirement. Along with this is the requirement

for upgrading the skills of existing educational administrators to become qualified for interaction and cooperation on the international stage.

Pickert's recommendations for helping American higher education to meet these new needs are worth reviewing. Educators need to include goals for international education in their curriculum planning; they must incorporate comparative and international assessments into individual disciplines; they must develop a core curriculum that ensures that students know more about the languages and cultures of other countries; and students should be encouraged to study abroad. "It is also possible to have an international experience without leaving the classroom, thanks to advances in computer and satellite communications," Pickert adds (n. pag.).

This last point is significant. Administrators will need to learn how to provide opportunities for their students to participate in international courses, effectively taught through technology-based distance education, such as through the online medium. This may be accomplished by both offering and taking distance learning courses through the Internet. The Internet expands the possibilities for international student exchange by allowing cost-effective, online instructional services to be achieved, thereby eliminating the expense and logistics of physical travel. For example, an American university could offer a course in Russian literature to its local students that is taught by a Russian professor who would be teaching from Russia. The Internet allows this kind of international education to occur and it is already happening today.

The educational administrator is responsible for keeping updated on the trends that are affecting and molding the society from which his students and teachers come. In the 1990s, the trends are happening quickly. In "Preparing School Administrators", Amy Klauke discusses these trends and the resulting objectives for educational administrators, such as the ability to communicate and cooperate with people of different cultures, positions, and perspectives within the school and the community; and the ability to share a common vision about the role and style of 21st century schools within the world community (n. pag.). The trends and changes that are affecting the global community today cannot be overlooked by educational administrators. One of these trends is that individual learners are now tapping into the international educational

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community through the Internet from home in search of instructional opportunities. Another is that international institutions are also navigating the Internet in search of potential international cooperation with other educational institutions. In both situations, the global educational community is expanding the idea of the shared common vision by searching the world for educational institutions that will provide them with the courses and instruction they require. Educational leaders need to recognize these trends, and they need to respond to the demands of their expanding student base through distance education in a cost-effective way.

III. Synthesis

Importance to Society

As we approach the 21st century, educational theorists are reflecting upon topics and problems of not just the local community or the multiculturalism of a nation like the United States, but of a much more massive culture: the global community. When analyzing the goals and responsibilities of the educational leader in the global community, we must address the needs of the world community in which we live and within which we share students and knowledge. The emergence of computerized technology and the Internet into our world culture in the last few years has made a huge impact, and many American educators are just starting to realize its potential as an instructional facility.

Professional Perspective

What I am talking about is not just theoretical, it is based on practical application. From firsthand, professional experience in administrating and teaching in an international online learning center, CALCampus (which has been online since 1986 and on the Internet since 1995), I have seen a great increase in the participation of geographically remote international students as a direct result of their ability to access the Internet. The physical location of the school and the students does not matter; what does matter is the ability to connect administrators, teachers, and students through the use of technology, in this case, through the use of the Internet. What I observe in my work is a reflection of what Pickert is describing in her 1992 article. Students from around the world are seeking educational opportunities to enhance their local learning, on an individual basis and on an institutional basis.

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For example, CALCampus teaches online courses to students from Urals State University in Ekaterinburg, Russia. Since early 1996, the Russian students have been taking online courses taught by American instructors in business subjects and English language learning, without having to come to America. This was a result of international administrative cooperation and communication and the use of the Internet. Furthermore, we also teach many students from the Pacific Rim who have taken individual responsibility for their education by contacting our school for particular courses. The point here is that the international educational community has already begun tapping into the instructional facilities offered through the Internet. American educational administrators should be doing the same thing and trying to arrange cooperative agreements with foreign universities for receiving and providing instruction through the Internet.

The global student population, in my case, has affected curriculum choices, as well as the process of delivering online course instruction. As an educational administrator, I have responded by adding courses that the international students need, such as English language courses for non-native speakers. I have also worked with CALCampus teachers to modify online course delivery methods to accommodate specific technical parameters of certain student groups. Along with this has been my need to communicate effectively with international educational administrators to work out mutually agreeable solutions to administrative problems, such as international money exchange and, in some cases, acceptable payment compromises to accommodate the budgetary restrictions of the foreign institution. These are some of the tasks of an international educational administrator.

It is necessary that the educational administrator respond to the needs and demands of the global educational community and to respond in an open and flexible way. This need, in theory, is the same need that educational theorists and historians have written about for a century. The job of the school is to fulfill the needs of the community it serves, and in 1998, this community is the global community.

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